

## DIGITAL STRATEGY: THE AUDIENCE CONNECTION'S 10 TOP TIPS

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1. Don't be frightened by the words **"DIGITAL STRATEGY"**. They merely mean the process of defining your use of digital tools and technology to help achieve your organisation's goals. Remember, you are an arts professional and you understand "strategy", "audiences" and "stakeholders". This is just a strategy to reach and connect with audiences and stakeholders, maximising what "digital" has to offer.
2. Think **"ORGANISATION WIDE"**. Don't just pass this to the 'marketing person' to handle. Digital strategy is about all the ways digital technology can help you achieve your goals across operational, artistic, marketing, sponsorship, fundraising and education areas – and more.
3. Get your team together for a **"VISIONING EXERCISE"**. Include representatives from each department and/or Board members, partners and even suppliers. Put yourself two to five years into the future and visualise how things will be different for your audiences, staff and sponsors as a result of your improved use of digital technology. This will get everyone on the same page and can be an energising organisation 'game-changer' if everyone is open to new approaches.
4. Undertake a **"DIGITAL AUDIT"** first. Again, this isn't as scary as it sounds. A digital audit is merely an honest assessment of where you are now when it comes to use of digital technology and tools. The more honest you are prepared to be; the more value you will get from the exercise. We've defined five key questions to ask yourself during your audit:
  - Is our current digital activity serving our organisational goals – or not?
  - What is our current digital ecosystem (tools, channels, audiences)?
  - What are our peers doing on their digital channels and how do we compare?
  - What are our digital Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats?
  - Where are we now in relation to the digital vision we defined as a team?
5. Don't get bogged down in paralysis because you don't have all the data to flesh out your digital audit. It is okay to **"START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW"** and then build data collection, research and analysis into your strategy as one of your priority activities.

6. Remember your digital strategy is a **“ROAD MAP”**. It needn't be over-detailed nor contain every online marketing or email campaign you deploy. It is a guiding document for the big ticket digital technology adoption or changes you will focus on over the period of the strategy.
  7. When defining the activity in your digital strategy, **“KEEP IT ACHIEVABLE”**. Don't attempt to tackle too much. Your organisation has finite resource and you can only make so many big changes at one time. If you are re-developing a website and creating a suite of digital content, that may be enough for the first two years. And this doesn't stop you commencing work on other strands of activity during that period. This might be planning to undertake a scoping exercise on your new CRM system, but not committing to implementing it yet.
  8. At the same time **“DON'T LIMIT YOUR THINKING”**. An idea that can seem unachievable might still be possible with partnerships, collaboration and/or creativity. Google “World Ballet Day” to learn how five ballet companies working in collaboration managed to create a global digital phenomenon. A truly smart idea can spark the imagination of funders and corporate sponsors.
  9. Don't just pass the responsibility of digital to interns or staff members with tactical digital experience, because you feel you lack knowledge. Truly effective use of **“DIGITAL NEEDS A STRATEGIC APPROACH”**. Most certainly harness their enthusiasm and skills – you need these. But ensure daily decisions around digital are being made with strategy front of mind.
  10. Use your documented digital strategy consistently **“AS A FILTER”**. Every week new opportunities will arise that will tempt your organisation to spend time and resource on digital tools or initiatives. With each possibility, return to your Digital Strategy and ask: “Does this align with our goals and support our priorities and – if not – is it important enough to override them?”.
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